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TO AWARD GOLD MEDALS FOR JAN SCRUGGS, ROBERT DOUBEK, AND JOHN WHEELER

ORIGINAL

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND COINAGE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
BANKING, FINANCE AND URBAN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-NINTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

H. R. 2591

A BILL TO AWARD SPECIAL CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDALS TO JAN SCRUGGS, ROBERT DOUBEK, AND JOHN WHEELER

MAY 20, 1986

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TO AWARD GOLD MEDALS FOR JAN SCRUGGS, ROBERT DOUBEK, AND JOHN WHEELER

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 1986

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND COINAGE,
COMMITTEE ON BANKING, FINANCE AND URBAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 10:05 a.m. in room 2222 of the Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Frank Annunzio (chairman of the subcommittee), presiding.

Present: Chairman Annunzio; Representatives Mitchell, Barnard, Hiler, and Ridge.

Chairman ANNUNZIO. The subcommittee will come to order.

This morning the subcommittee meets to hear testimony on H.R. 2591, legislation authorizing the presentation of specially struck congressional gold medals to Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek, and John Wheeler. These medals would be presented by the President on behalf of the Congress in recognition of their accomplishments in erecting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Pursuant to the rules of the subcommittee, no bill authorizing gold medals may be considered unless it is cosponsored by at least 218 Members, a majority of the House. H.R. 2591 has 260 cosponsors, easily meeting the cosponsorship requirement. I am indeed proud to be one of the cosponsors.

The cosponsorship requirement was instituted in 1980 to make certain that only events and individuals that have truly contributed to the history and development of this country will be considered for gold medals. The provision is intended to make certain that by requiring the support of a majority of the Members of the most democratic legislative body in the world, only the most important acts and individuals will be honored.

On March 3, 1983, I introduced the Vietnam Veterans National Medal Act in the 98th Congress. It was soon cosponsored by 245 Members of the House. This was the first bill that officially recognized and honored the contributions of Vietnam veterans to their country. Following the enactment of the legislation, more than 700 artists entered the design competition, even though no monetary prize was offered.

The Vietnam Veterans National Medal went on sale a few weeks ago. The medal, which portrays the ubiquitous helicopter used in Vietnam, has been well received in the veterans community. It is a small tribute to the 2.7 million men and women who served in Vietnam. In a small way it expresses the Nation's thanks to them.

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The Vietnam Veterans Memorial has served not only as a moving remembrance for those who sacrificed their lives at the request of their country, but also as a symbol of national reconciliation. It has helped heal the bitter legacy of the Vietnam war. It recognizes the sacrifices made by our Vietnam veterans and serves as a reminder of the need for national unity.

Through hard work, faith, and determination, Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek, and John Wheeler brought this monument to fruition. H.R. 2591 recognizes their accomplishment in helping bind our Nation's wounds.

[The text of H.R. 2591 follows:]

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99TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2591

To award special congressional gold medals to Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek, and Jack Wheeler.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 22, 1985

Mrs. VUCANOVICH (for herself, Mr. BONIOR of Michigan, Mr. KASICH, Mr. DASCHLE, Mr. BILIRAKIS, and Mr. EVANS of Illinois) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs

---

A BILL

To award special congressional gold medals to Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek, and Jack Wheeler.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND STATEMENT OF POLICY.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial symbolizes, for veterans, the concern and respect of the American people for the service of veterans, and, for all Americans, the spirit of reconciliation which preserves us as a Nation.

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(b) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—The tireless efforts of Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek, and Jack Wheeler to give the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to the Nation, should be recognized by awarding each of them a special congressional gold medal.

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION TO PRESENT GOLD MEDALS.

The President is authorized to present on behalf of the Congress 3 gold medals of appropriate design, 1 each to Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek, and Jack Wheeler.

SEC. 3. PRODUCTION OF GOLD MEDALS AND PRODUCTION AND SALE OF BRONZE DUPLICATE MEDALS.

(a) PRODUCTION OF GOLD MEDALS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall coin 3 gold medals and shall deliver such medals to the President for presentation under section 2. Each gold medal shall contain suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the Secretary.

(b) PRODUCTION AND SALE OF BRONZE DUPLICATE MEDALS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall coin and sell bronze medals which are duplicates of the gold medals coined pursuant to subsection (a) under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at a price sufficient to cover the cost of the gold medals and such duplicates, including the cost of labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead.

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SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated for any fiscal year beginning on or after October 1, 1986, such funds as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 5. EFFECT ON OTHER LAW.

The medals provided for in this Act are national medals for the purpose of section 5111 of title 31, United States Code, and are coins for the purposes of sections 331 and 485 of title 18, United States Code.

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Chairman ANNUNZIO. At this time it is my pleasure to present the ranking minority member of this subcommittee, John Hiler.

Mr. HILER. Mr. Chairman, I have no opening statement. I look forward to the hearing.

Chairman ANNUNZIO. Mr. Ridge, a member of this subcommittee, is delayed on his flight into Washington. I do want everyone to know that I will protect his rights when he gets here. He can make his opening statement.

I also have a statement by Senator Charles McC. Mathias on the congressional gold medals for Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek, and John Wheeler. I ask unanimous consent that the entire statement of Senator Mathias be made part of the record.

[The statement of Senator Mathias follows:]

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Statement by Senator Charles McC. Mathias on legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Jan Scruggs, Robert W. Doubek and John P. Wheeler

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I am delighted to have the opportunity to testify on the legislation to authorize the President of the United States to award Congressional Gold Medals to Jan Scruggs, Robert W. Doubek and, John P. Wheeler III, in recognition of their role in giving the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to the Nation. The Senate unanimously approved this legislation last winter.

The Congressional Gold Medal is one of this country's highest honors and has been awarded in recognition of extraordinary contributions to American society. As sponsor of the original legislation to grant land for the Vietnam memorial, I have known Jan Scruggs, Bob Doubek and Jack Wheeler for the better part of seven years and I can think of no more deserving individuals to receive this accolade.

If it were not for Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek, and John Wheeler, there would be no Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Jan Scruggs conceived of the idea of a Memorial with all the names of the dead, and tirelessly spread his message across America. Bob Doubek immediately joined him, incorporated the Memorial Fund, and managed the design competition, the listing, checking and engraving of names, and construction. John Wheeler, as Chairman of the Board, was the Fund's

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devoted captain, personally recruiting and directing the band of Vietnam veterans and professional personnel who successfully conducted the work of fundraising, legislation, public debate, organizational design and management, cost control, and auditing. He conceived of the vigil of names read at the National Cathedral during the Memorial dedication week in 1982. In 1980 the Congress enacted the legislation entrusting to the Fund the land on the Mall for the Memorial.

Anyone who recalls the struggle of these men knows that it was no easy task. There were a number of obstacles to overcome. But they persevered.

Today, as a result of their dedication, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial exists as one of the most powerful - and most frequently visited - sites in Washington. Even in a city famous for its breathtaking attractions, it stands out. Thousands of mothers, fathers, wives and children each year make the pilgrimages to the solemn black granite slabs on which the names of their fallen loved ones are inscribed. There, many of them say, they have experienced a sense of reunion and a healing of the emotional wounds that may have remained open since the war.

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It stands in The Mall, which so often has been the place for forums of opinion and dissent. Planted into the earth, it has become a symbol of the reconciliation this country has finally achieved on Vietnam - thanks in large part to the efforts of Jan Scruggs, Bob Doubek, and Jack Wheeler.

I can think of no better way to show our appreciation of Jan Scruggs, Bob Doubek, and Jack Wheeler than by awarding them Congressional Gold Medals. I urge you to support this legislation and report it out favorably, just as many of you supported the original resolution granting land for the Memorial.

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Chairman ANNUNZIO. Our first witness this morning is our distinguished colleague from the State of Nevada, Mrs. Vucanovich, who is serving her second term in the Congress, representing the Second District of Nevada. She serves with me on the Committee on House Administration and, it is a genuine pleasure to have her here this morning.

She is the sponsor of H.R. 2591, and has worked tirelessly to obtain the necessary cosponsorship for subcommittee consideration.

Barbara, you have a prepared statement. The entire statement will be made part of the record, and you can proceed in your own manner.

STATEMENT OF HON. BARBARA F. VUCANOVICH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEVADA

Mrs. VUCANOVICH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank you and members of your subcommittee for holding this hearing on H.R. 2591.

Before I begin, I would like to ask unanimous consent to include in the record a letter from John T. Walker, the Bishop of Washington Cathedral, in support of this bill.

Chairman ANNUNZIO. Without objection, Bishop Walker's letter will be made a part of the record.

[The letter referred to from Bishop Walker follows:]

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PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL FOUNDATION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

May 19, 1986

The Honorable Frank Annunzio
Chairman, Committee on Consumers Affairs & Coinage
House Committee on Banking, Finance & Urban Affairs

Dear Mr. Annunzio:

We are privileged to support HR 2591 which will honor three private citizens who have at great personal sacrifice brought into being the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. In our experience of many years in the nation's capital, this is a first instance of an important national monument resulting entirely from private initiative. Mr. John Wheeler, Mr. Jan Scruggs and Mr. Robert Doubek are well known to us personally, Mr. Wheeler for about fifteen years and Mr. Scruggs and Mr. Doubek since 1981 when Washington Cathedral began working with returning Vietnam veterans. We were asked by Mr. Wheeler in the spring of 1981 to provide a public forum for returning veterans to talk about their experience. With Mr. Wheeler's help we organized a colloquia, Vietnam War: Unfinished Business. It was well attended and made the public better aware of the justified grievances of those who fought for us in Vietnam. Our relationship with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund grew and we soon began planning to participate in the events surrounding the dedication of the memorial in November 1982.

At the urging of Messers. Wheeler, Scruggs and Doubek we decided to read aloud in Washington Cathedral the names of each veteran who died. From the evening of November 10 until the evening of November 12, all 57,939 names were read in the cathedral with prayers interspersed. This pastoral act organized by the three you are honoring attracted more than 12,000 people. Family and friends, returning veterans, members of Congress, high-ranking military and everyday citizens came at all hours of the day and night to hear and pray and grieve. The sensitivity with which this was organized was a great credit to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. On Sunday, November 14th, following the dedication of the memorial, there was a great service at the cathedral attended by thousands, again organized by

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the three persons we seek to honor, working with the staff at the cathedral. In all of this, over a period of several years, we worked with these three men, men of the highest character and dedication. We are proud of our association and that this country still produces persons like them who will give of themselves for no gain save only to honor their fellow servicemen and women who died in Vietnam.

You know of the great success of the memorial, and of its central place in the hearts of the visitors to Washington. You know that over three million visitors go to it each year. You know how it moves your countrymen. We do not need to elaborate. You know also that this great national shrine would not have come into being without the efforts of John Wheeler, Jan Scruggs and Robert Doubek. You will honor America by striking a medal to honor them.

Thank you for allowing this testimony in support of HR 2591. We would appreciate you including it in the record of the committee proceedings.

John T. Walker
Bishop of Washington

Charles A. Perry
Provost, Washington Cathedral

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Mrs. VUCANOVICH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

My involvement with this legislation began when I was contacted by a fellow Nevadan, Louise Scruggs, who told me of her son's efforts on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

On May 22, 1985, I introduced H.R. 2591, with David Bonior, John Kasich, Tom Daschle, Mike Bilirakis, and Lane Evans as original cosponsors. Since this time we have been joined by many of our colleagues, a total of 259 cosponsors.

I am particularly pleased that so many of our colleagues on the subcommittee and the full committee are among that number. In fact, in addition to you, Mr. Chairman, we have been joined by the chairman of the full committee, Mr. St Germain, for a total of 8 members from the subcommittee and 28 members from the full committee. To put it briefly, this is a clear majority of bipartisan support for this legislation.

As you know, this legislation, which passed the Senate by a voice vote on November 14, 1985, provides for a gold medal in honor of Jan C. Scruggs, president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; Robert W. Doubek, executive director of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; and John Wheeler, chairman of the board of the Vietnam Memorial.

It is through the tireless efforts of these caring and dedicated individuals that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial became a reality. Through their initiative, the necessary private funds were raised to build the memorial, which often has drawn over 10,000 visitors a day. It is estimated that 20 million Americans have visited the memorial.

It is altogether fitting that these men be recognized for their efforts in seeing their dream become a reality, a dream that has been a major step in healing the wounds of a country pained by the Vietnam war.

Having said that, this memorial was not without controversy or critics, and I do not question the sincerity or the reasons of fellow Americans who hold opposing views, many of whom bravely fought and survived just to see their comrades die. But now that, too, is behind us.

The country owes a great deal to those who have served our Nation bravely. There is no question the security and protection of the United States is not entirely dependent upon military equipment. Many men and women have dedicated their lives and made many personal sacrifices in the defense of this country. We should never lose sight of this.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is the single most important step in honoring those who served in the Vietnam war and uniting our Nation in recognizing those men and women who gave their lives for our country.

It is fitting that we honor the three individuals who have made a tremendous contribution to our veterans and thus our country.

Mr. Chairman, I am proud to be a member of a military family, with veterans who served their country and made sacrifices for its citizens. In my own family, my brother and my brother-in-law served in Vietnam, as well as one of my sons served three tours of duty as a volunteer in Vietnam, and one son-in-law also served there.

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I urge the positive consideration of this legislation to recognize these men for their relentless determination in their efforts to honor veterans.

In closing, I again thank the chairman and the members of the subcommittee for holding this hearing and giving me the opportunity to testify.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Representative Vucanovich follows:]

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STATEMENT
ON STRIKING OF CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDALS
before the
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND COINAGE
of the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON BANKING, FINANCE AND URBAN AFFAIRS
by
CONGRESSMAN BARBARA F. VUCANOVICH
May 20, 1986

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MR. CHAIRMAN I WOULD FIRST LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK YOU AND THE MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE FOR HOLDING THIS HEARING TODAY FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2591.

MY INVOLVEMENT WITH THIS LEGISLATION BEGAN WHEN I WAS CONTACTED BY A FELLOW NEVADAN, LOUISE SCRUGGS, WHO TOLD ME OF HER SON'S EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL.

ON MAY 22, 1985, I INTRODUCED H.R. 2591 WITH DAVID BONIOR, JOHN KASICH, TOM DASCHLE, MIKE BILIRAKIS, AND LANE EVANS AS ORIGINAL COSPONSORS. SINCE THAT TIME WE HAVE BEEN JOINED BY MANY OF OUR COLLEAGUES...A TOTAL OF 259 COSPONSORS. I AM PARTICULARLY PLEASED THAT SO MANY OF OUR COLLEAGUES ON THE SUBCOMMITTEE AND THE FULL COMMITTEE ARE AMONG THAT NUMBER. IN FACT, IN ADDITION TO YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN, WE HAVE BEEN JOINED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FULL COMMITTEE, MR. ST. GERMAIN, FOR A TOTAL OF EIGHT MEMBERS FROM THE SUBCOMMITTEE AND TWENTY EIGHT MEMBERS FROM THE FULL COMMITTEE. TO PUT IT BRIEFLY THERE IS A CLEAR MAJORITY OF BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR THIS LEGISLATION.

AS YOU KNOW THIS LEGISLATION, WHICH PASSED THE SENATE BY A VOICE VOTE ON NOVEMBER 14, 1985, PROVIDES FOR A GOLD MEDAL IN HONOR OF JAN C. SCRUGGS, PRESIDENT OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL, ROBERT W. DOUBEK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL, AND JOHN WHEELER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE VIETNAM MEMORIAL.

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IT IS THROUGH THE TIRELESS EFFORTS OF THESE CARING AND DEDICATED INDIVIDUALS THAT THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL BECAME A REALITY. THROUGH THEIR INITIATIVE THE NECESSARY PRIVATE FUNDS WERE RAISED TO BUILD THE MEMORIAL, WHICH OFTEN HAS DRAWN OVER 10,000 VISITORS A DAY. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 20 MILLION AMERICANS HAVE VISITED THE MEMORIAL. IT IS ALTOGETHER FITTING THAT THESE MEN BE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN SEEING THEIR DREAM BECOME A REALITY -- A DREAM THAT HAS BEEN A MAJOR STEP IN HEALING THE WOUNDS OF A COUNTRY PAINED BY THE VIETNAM WAR.

HAVING SAID THAT, THIS MEMORIAL WAS NOT WITHOUT CONTROVERSY OR CRITICS AND I DO NOT QUESTION THE SINCERITY OR THE REASONS OF FELLOW AMERICANS WHO HOLD OPPOSING VIEWS...MANY OF WHOM BRAVELY FOUGHT AND SURVIVED, JUST TO SEE THEIR COMRADES DIE. BUT NOW, THAT, TOO, IS BEHIND US.

THE COUNTRY OWES A GREAT DEAL TO THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED OUR NATION BRAVELY. THERE IS NO QUESTION THE SECURITY AND PROTECTION OF THE UNITED STATES IS NOT ENTIRELY DEPENDENT UPON MILITARY EQUIPMENT. MANY MEN AND WOMEN HAVE DEDICATED THEIR LIVES AND MADE MANY PERSONAL SACRIFICES IN THE DEFENSE OF THIS COUNTRY. WE SHOULD NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF THIS.

THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT STEP IN HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED IN THE VIETNAM WAR AND UNITING OUR NATION IN RECOGNIZING THOSE MEN AND WOMEN WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR OUR COUNTRY. IT IS FITTING THAT WE HONOR THE THREE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE MADE A TREMENDOUS CONTRIBUTION TO OUR VETERANS AND THUS, OUR COUNTRY.

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MR. CHAIRMAN, I AM PROUD TO BE A MEMBER OF A MILITARY FAMILY, WITH VETERANS WHO, LIKE VIETNAM VETERANS, SERVED THEIR COUNTRY AND MADE SACRIFICES FOR ITS CITIZENS. I URGE THE POSITIVE CONSIDERATION OF THIS LEGISLATION TO RECOGNIZE THESE MEN FOR THEIR RELENTLESS DETERMINATION IN THEIR EFFORTS TO HONOR VETERANS.

IN CLOSING, I AGAIN THANK THE CHAIRMAN AND THE MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE FOR HOLDING THIS HEARING AND GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY.

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Chairman ANNUNZIO. We appreciate your being here and thank you for your very excellent statement.

Our next witness is the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts, Senator John F. Kerry, serving his first term in Congress. He is a decorated veteran of the U.S. Navy. He won a Silver Star, a Bronze Star, and three Purple Hearts in Vietnam.

After leaving the Navy, he was active in the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Although only in his second year in the Senate, he is rapidly becoming a leader on veterans issues.

Senator, it is a distinct pleasure for me to welcome you before our subcommittee. Without objection, your entire statement will be made part of the record, and you can summarize and proceed in your own manner.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will indeed summarize and try to be brief.

I thank the chairman and the subcommittee for hearing my testimony and also for having this hearing that many of us consider to be a very important and symbolic effort.

As everyone knows, the effort to fully bring home veterans from Vietnam has been a long and difficult one, and I think that perhaps the memorial itself is such a stark and eloquent statement to the sacrifices made and to the nature of the war in Vietnam that for that alone probably Jan Scruggs, Bob Doubek, and John Wheeler deserve this medal.

But I would have to say to you that as a Vietnam veteran and as someone who has walked and joined those other millions who visit that memorial, which I understand is the most visited memorial of all memorials in Washington now, that from that perspective as a veteran I would say to this committee that I think there is a stronger reason why they deserve this award, and that is that through this memorial and through their energy they have done two things.

First, they have provided for the healing process and for the homecoming in a way that I think no other effort, no other gesture by people in this country succeeded in doing.

Second, they have contributed something special to the belief that we all have about individual action, about people pursuing their dreams and realizing those dreams.

I think that when one considers how Jan Scruggs began conceiving of the idea, really symbolic of the whole return of Vietnam veterans, because it was not a government-sponsored effort, it was not an outside sponsored effort, it was an effort that came from the heart and from the guts of a Vietnam veteran.

As were many of the other efforts to return, it was a self-started Vietnam veterans effort, and when Jan began he didn't know anybody. He didn't have any contacts. He didn't have any access.

But he just pursued his dream in a dogged fashion, knocked on doors, got the support of people in Congress, got the support of others outside, entertainers, leaders in the business community, and I think the wall is a remarkable tribute in and of itself to the

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leadership that Jan Scruggs, Bob Doubek, and John Wheeler provided.

So in that sense I think it is in the very, very highest traditions, in the best sense of what the congressional gold medal is about.

I would as a veteran and also now as a Senator and Member of this institution commend to the committee this bill, which the Senate has forwarded, and I hope you will pass it and duly honor these American heroes.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Senator Kerry follows:]

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Statement of Senator John Kerry
May 20, 1986

Mr. Chairman, Thank you very much for inviting me to testify before the Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs and Coinage in favor of H.R. 2591. I am honored to be in the distinguished company of Senator John Warner, of Reps. Dave Bonior, Barbara Vucanovich, and the other distinguished witnesses testifying here today in favor of this legislation. This bill, which would award Congressional gold medals to Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek, and John Wheeler for their leadership in establishing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, is both appropriate and well-deserved.

The Vietnam memorial here in Washington, since its creation in 1982, has been an important part of a national healing process. Speaking as a Vietnam veteran myself, I know that the Vietnam memorial has been an important part of the "homecoming" process for many Vietnam veterans. The wall at the Vietnam memorial serves as a stark and eloquent reminder to all of us of the sacrifices, and the heroism, of many young Americans in the Vietnam war.

I understand that the Vietnam memorial is now the most visited memorial in all of Washington, and that it has had

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almost 25 million visitors since its dedication. I know that I often visit there myself, to view the names of my friends which are inscribed there, and to place issues of war and peace in their proper perspective.

This nation owes a debt of gratitude to Jan Scruggs, to Robert Doubek, and to John Wheeler for their initiative and their leadership in bringing the Vietnam Memorial into existence. Without their efforts, there would not be a Vietnam memorial today.

I would like to say a few words about Jan Scruggs, because he is a personal friend. Jan Scruggs is a true American hero. He has proven that one person can make a difference, when that person has an dream, and the dedication to make that dream a reality.

Jan served as an E-4 army infantryman in the 199th infantry in Vietnam. He served as a corporal at Xuan Loc from 1969 to 1970, where he was wounded in combat. Jan was later decorated for valor for his service in Vietnam.

While working as a GS-9 at the Department of Labor in 1979, Jan conceived of the idea of a memorial to the veterans of Vietnam, and to the fallen of that war. Although he had no money, and no contacts in Washington, Jan put together the ideas and the labor to make his dream a reality. Over much

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opposition and much skepticism, and in the face of a national mood which wished to forget about the pain of Vietnam, Jan was able, along with John Wheeler, Robert Doubek, and others, to create the Memorial which has come to inspire a nation.

That struggle is chronicled in Jan's book, "To Heal a Nation", which I have read with great interest. I understand that there are now plans to make the book into a movie, as well it should be.

This award to Jan Scruggs, and to Robert Doubek and John Wheeler, is well-deserved. It has the support of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, of American Gold Star Mothers, of Vietnam Veterans of America, and it has my whole-hearted support as well. I commend you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. I look forward to the day when H.R. 2591 will become a law, and this nation will honor three true heroes - Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek, and John Wheeler - with Congressional Gold Medals for their service to this country in establishing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

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Chairman ANNUNZIO. Thank you, Senator Kerry, for being with us this morning and for your very excellent statement and the cooperation you have extended to this subcommittee.

Now, it is a genuine pleasure for me to introduce my colleague, the Honorable David E. Bonior, who represents the 12th District of Michigan.

Congressman Bonior, who served in the Air Force between 1968 and 1972, is deeply committed to assisting Vietnam veterans. He is a cosponsor of H.R. 2591. He is the founder of the Vietnam Veterans in Congress and has been instrumental in passing significant legislation benefiting Vietnam veterans.

I welcome you today, Dave. If you have a prepared statement, your entire statement will be made part of the record. Without objection, so ordered. You can proceed in your own manner.

STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID E. BONIOR, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Mr. BONIOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am proud to appear here today in strong support of H.R. 2591, a resolution that was introduced by the gentlewoman to my right. This is a bipartisan measure, cosponsored by more than 250 Members of the House.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the demands on the subcommittee's time, and I wanted to commend the chairman and the members of the subcommittee for their leadership in scheduling this important piece of legislation today.

I also want to commend Congresswoman Vucanovich for the energy and leadership she has shown in advancing this important piece of legislation, and to Senator Kerry for the interest he has shown over the years on Vietnam veterans issues and being here this morning.

Mr. Chairman, for over 200 years this Nation has revered its warriors who have joined battles against those who, through force, have tried to alter our chosen way of life. Today places like Yorktown and Omaha Beach are pilgrimages for those who never experienced their glory yet feel a sense of intangible gratitude for those who did.

The soldiers of the Vietnam war met our Nation's highest standards of service. The house-to-house battle for Hue, the murderous shellings that were absorbed at Khe Sanh tested the courage of our soldiers no less than the battles in World War II or Korea, yet if the courage was the same, the war was not. It was hard to separate the warrior from the divisive debate over the Vietnam war, and the Nation was very slow to recognize our Vietnam veterans.

Today a new attitude is moving across the country. Our country has begun to remember and to honor those who served their Nation during one of the most difficult periods of our history.

In November 1982, the Nation paused to mark the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Tens of thousands of veterans joined in their own parade down Constitution Avenue. Thousands crowded into a small chapel in the National Cathedral to listen as veterans, friends, and relatives read the names of those who fell in battle or are still missing in action, more than 57,000 in all.

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More than any other single event, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial forged the Nation's new willingness to honor Vietnam veterans and to reconcile the emotional wounds this country incurred from the Vietnam war. More, I think, than any other single event, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has allowed this Nation the opportunity both to honor the individuals who sacrificed their lives for us and to finally welcome home the soldiers who returned.

Vietnam veterans came from all walks of life, Mr. Chairman. They came from small towns, from ghettos, from steel mills and farms. Their story is basically America's story, the story of the last two decades of our history.

Yes, it is the tragic story of a Nation that forgot its veterans, but it is also the story, the very proud story, of the soldiers that would not be pushed aside and of a Nation that was at last prepared to listen, and you can see that story on the faces of the thousands of people who visit the memorial each day.

Some are veterans, seeking out the names of lost comrades. Some are fathers, mothers, wives, brothers, sisters, and friends. Most are just Americans who regret the years of neglect and welcome the opportunity to remember, and as we honor the value of service to country that is the duty of citizenship, so are we proud of those who fight and die in their country's name.

Today we have an opportunity to honor the three Vietnam veterans who gave this Nation the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, who gave this Nation the chance to remember and to change: Jan Scruggs, Bob Doubek, and John Wheeler.

Building the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was not easy. The very idea of the memorial was controversial, and its striking design was even more so. There is only a Vietnam Veterans Memorial today because these three men stood tall against tremendous pressure and tremendous odds.

Perhaps in the end the controversy is best forgotten, but today we should remember the price of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The personal lives of those who fought for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial were made public and repeatedly attacked.

The memorial itself, today the most popular in Washington, was vilified. It was called a black gash of shame. It was compared to the ovens at Dachau, and in one of the kinder attacks it was an Orwellian glob.

Great changes never come easily, Mr. Chairman. The decision to forget the war and its veterans made by an entire Nation, reinforced for a decade, could not be reversed in one day or without controversy. It required discipline and commitment over time and over years.

Let those who wander by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial pause to look at the statue, to read from the names, and to remember the courage of those who served and the sorrow of a Nation that turned away.

But let them also remember that despite the years of delay, we came together as one people to honor the dead, to praise the living, and to plant this memorial forever in the memory of our people.

Because of the devotion of Jan Scruggs, John Wheeler, and Robert Doubek, this country has been given the opportunity to heal

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the wounds left by the Vietnam war and to reconcile a part of our history that we too easily tried to forget.

I would like to close with a brief procedural point. As you know, the Senate has already passed by unanimous consent companion legislation. I would hope that the House passage of this measure could be handled in a way that would avoid a conference.

Mr. Chairman, I am deeply honored for this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge the achievements of these three outstanding individuals, and I urge, in conclusion, your support and your subcommittee's support for, I think, a very important and needed piece of legislation for these three outstanding Americans.

[The prepared statement of Representative Bonior follows:]

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H.R. 2591: GOLD MEDALS FOR JAN SCRUGGS, JOHN WHEELER, AND ROBERT DOUBEK

Testimony by

The

Honorable David E. Bonior

May 20, 1986

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Mr. Chairman, I am proud to appear here today in strong support of H.R. 2591, a measure introduced by Congresswoman Vucanovich and myself. This is a bipartisan measure, cosponsored by more than 250 Members of this House.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the demands on the Subcommittee's time, and I want to commend the Chairman, and the Members of the Subcommittee, for their leadership in scheduling today's hearing.

I also want to commend Congresswoman Vucanovich for the energy and leadership she has shown in advancing this important legislation.

For over two hundred years, this nation revered its warriors who joined battle against those who sought through force to alter our chosen way of life.

Today, places like Yorktown and Omaha Beach are objects of pilgrimage for those who never experienced their glory, yet feel a sense of intangible gratitude to those who did.

The soldiers of the Vietnam War met our nation's highest standards of service. The house-to-house battle for Hue, the murderous shelling absorbed at Khe Sanh tested the courage of our soldiers no less than the battles of World War II and Korea.

Yet, if the courage was the same, the war was not. It was hard to separate the warrior from the divisive debate over the Vietnam War and the nation was slow to recognize our Vietnam veterans.

Today, a new attitude is moving across the nation. Our country has begun to remember, and to honor, those who served their nation during one of the most difficult periods of our history.

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Vietnam veterans came from small towns and ghettos, from steel mills and farms. Their story is America's story, the story of the last two decades of our history.

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Most are just Americans who regret the years of neglect and welcome the opportunity to remember. As we honor the value of service to country that is the duty of citizenship, so we are proud of those who fight and die in their country's name.

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Perhaps, in the end, the controversy is best forgotten, but today we should remember the price of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The personal lives of those who fought for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial were made public and repeatedly attacked.

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The Memorial itself, today the most popular in Washington, was vilified. It was called a "black gash of shame." It was compared to the "ovens at Dachau." In one of the kinder attacks, it was called an "Orwellian glob."

Great changes never come easily. The decision to forget the war, made by an entire nation, reinforced for a decade, could not be reversed in one day, and without controversy. It required discipline and commitment, over years.

Let those who wander by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial pause to look at the statue, to read from the names, and to remember--to remember the courage of those who served and the sorrow of a nation that turned away.

But let them also remember that despite the years of delay, we came together as one people to honor our dead, to praise the living and to plant this memorial forever in the memory of our people.

Because of the devotion and dedication of Jan Scruggs, John Wheeler, and Robert Doubek this country has been given the opportunity to heal the wounds left by the Vietnam War and to reconcile a part of our history that we too easily tried to forget.

I would like to close with a brief procedural point. As you know, the Senate has already passed by unanimous consent companion legislation. I would hope that House passage of this measure could be handled in a way that would avoid a conference.

Mr. Chairman, I am deeply honored for this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge the achievment of these three outstanding individuals. I urge support for H.R. 2591.

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Chairman ANNUNZIO. Thank you very much, Dave, for an excellent statement. I appreciate it. It's a pleasure to have you with us today. We don't see you that often, but we'd love to have you come back any time you desire.

Mr. BONIOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ANNUNZIO. The next witness today is the distinguished Senator from Virginia who has appeared before this subcommittee on many other occasions, and we've won some fights together. Hopefully, we can win this fight, Senator Warner.

Senator Warner is an original cosponsor of S. 865, the companion bill to H.R. 2591. The Senator has a long and distinguished career as a public servant. He served in the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps during World War II, and the Korean war.

From 1972-74, he was Secretary of the Navy. He serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee, where he chairs the important Subcommittee on Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces.

Senator, I welcome you before the subcommittee. Your entire statement, without objection, will be made part of the record and you can proceed in your own manner.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN W. WARNER, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF VIRGINIA

Senator WARNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I express appreciation to you for your thoughtful introduction and the opportunity to appear before you and other Members of this distinguished committee, and to join my colleagues here in the Congress in expressing our heartfelt belief that this action should go forward by the Congress.

With the permission of the Chair and members of the committee, I will just submit my statement, which I wrote myself. I just don't feel it's necessary to go over it. You have listened to the facts patiently this morning.

Just a personal observation. My contribution to the Armed Forces of the United States as a uniformed individual was very modest. I received far more than I contributed in both World War II and in Korea.

But, during the course of over 5 years in the Department of Defense as Secretary and Under Secretary of the Navy, I visited Vietnam many times. And I think all Americans got caught up in that situation with mixed emotions.

When this opportunity was presented to me to participate in a very modest way in joining this group in putting together the memorial, I told Jan Scruggs that I just wanted to be a private in the rear ranks. And I think I stayed there throughout.

My contribution was probably just one of trying to keep the momentum going forward with this concept during times of extraordinary controversy.

And I don't mean to in any way denigrate those who had ideas other than Mr. Scruggs and his colleagues, but we assured them a fair hearing, a fair opportunity to contribute.

Indeed, on several occasions, the contributions of, shall we say, the critics became very constructive additions to the eventual outcome of this memorial.

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The memorial was born in controversy, it was constructed in controversy and will live on forever, I expect, in controversy, the history against which it was built is one of controversy. So we shouldn't try and see a situation that is absent controversy; it will always be present.

I, as head of the bicentennial, saw Federal efforts on many memorials started but few finished in this country, but this one is indeed unique. It's almost providential that these men had the determination to carry forward and achieve their goal.

And I think it's most appropriate that the Congress recognize them for their efforts. I commend the Chair and members of the committee and I hope the House will act in a manner similar to the Senate and that this matter will come to a successful conclusion.

I have seldom in my life ever experienced personal associations such as I have had with these three principals here. They are indeed men of great foresight, determination and vision. I am glad to be just one of the many to have worked with them to help this come to pass.

I thank the Chair.

[The prepared statement of Senator Warner follows:]

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COMMITTEE STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN WARNER
IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 2591, TO AWARD CONGRESSIONAL
GOLD MEDALS TO JAN SCRUGGS, ROBERT DOUBEK AND JOHN WHEELER
HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND COINAGE
MAY 20, 1986

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, IT IS MY PRIVILEGE TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU TODAY TO SUPPORT H.R. 2591, WHICH WOULD AWARD CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDALS TO JAN SCRUGGS, ROBERT DOUBEK AND JOHN P. WHEELER,III FOR THEIR EXEMPLARY EFFORTS IN BRINGING TO FRUITION THE IDEA WHICH IS NOW THE VIETNAM VETERANS WAR MEMORIAL. AS I'M SURE THE COMMITTEE IS WELL AWARE, IT WAS MY PRIVILEGE TO HAVE INTRODUCED AND HAVE PASSED S. 865, THE COMPANION LEGISLATION IN THE SENATE, WITH MY GOOD FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE SENATOR MATHIAS.

THERE IS LITTLE ABOUT THE THREE MEN WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO HONOR WHICH THE COMMITTEE DOES NOT KNOW. HOWEVER, I WOULD ASK THE COMMITTEE'S INDULGENCE WHILE I ITERATE MY APPRECIATION AND SUPPORT FOR THESE FINE AMERICANS.

THE VIETNAM WAR WAS A COSTLY ONE FOR THE UNITED STATES. IT WAS UNIQUELY DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER WAR IN WHICH THIS NATION HAS EVER BEEN INVOLVED. AS THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY DURING OVER 5 YEARS OF THAT TURBULENT PERIOD, I WELL RECALL HOW DIVISIVE THAT WAR WAS. AS A NATION WE ARE NOW AND WILL BE FOR AN INDETERMINANT PERIOD, STRIVING FOR RECONCILIATION. NO THREE MEN HAVE DONE MORE TOWARDS THAT GOAL THAN THE PROPOSED RECIPIENTS OF THESE MEDALS.

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I OFFER THESE REFLECTIONS NOT TO REMIND US OF THE DIVISIVENESS OF WAR, BUT TO ILLUSTRATE THE INCREDIBLE PROBLEMS THESE THREE MEN FACED IN ACCOMPLISHING THEIR GOAL OF MEMORIALIZING THE HONORABLE SERVICE OF OUR MEN AND WOMEN WHO FOUGHT IN VIETNAM. MANY BELIEVED THOSE PROBLEMS INSURMOUNTABLE. JAN SCRUGGS, BOB DOUBEK AND JACK WHEELER NEVER LOST THEIR FAITH OR DETERMINATION.

JAN SCRUGGS ENLISTED IN THE MILITARY RIGHT OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL. HE SERVED AS A RIFLEMAN IN VIETNAM IN 1969 AND 70, AND WAS DECORATED FOR VALOR. HAVING SEEN HALF OF THE MEN IN HIS COMPANY EITHER KILLED OR WOUNDED, JAN HIMSELF WAS WOUNDED AND SPENT TWO MONTHS IN A HOSPITAL. UPON HIS RETURN FROM VIETNAM, JAN EARNED A DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING, AND I SUSPECT THAT IT WAS DURING THIS TIME THAT JAN BECAME MORE FULLY AWARE OF THE IMMENSE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS WHICH RETURNING VETERANS ENCOUNTERED WHEN THEY CAME HOME TO A COUNTRY UNREADY, UNABLE AND UNWILLING TO ACCEPT THEM.

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IN APRIL 1979, JAN SCRUGGS MET ROBERT DOUBEK AND FIRST BROACHED THE SUBJECT OF A VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL. BOB DOUBEK HAD BEEN AN AIR FORCE INTELLIGENCE OFFICER IN VIETNAM IN 1969. IN TEN SHORT DAYS, BOB DOUBEK AND JAN SCRUGGS HAD TAKEN THE MEMORIAL IDEA ON ITS FIRST STEP DOWN THE ROAD TOWARD REALITY, AND ON APRIL 27, 1979, THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND WAS INCORPORATED, AND THE LONG STRUGGLE TO HEAL THE NATION'S WOUNDS BEGAN. JAN AND BOB DECIDED THAT THE MEMORIAL SHOULD NOT MAKE A POLITICAL STATEMENT, BUT SHOULD TRANSCEND POLITICS TO RECOGNIZE AND PAY TRIBUTE TO THE INDISPUTABLE FACT THAT OUR VIETNAM VETERANS SERVED HONORABLY. FURTHER, JAN AND BOB DECIDED THAT THIS MEMORIAL WOULD BE FINANCED BY PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS ALONE, RATHER THAN SEEKING FEDERAL FUNDING.

ON JULY 4, 1979 THE VVMF'S EFFORTS WERE REPORTED ON THE CBS EVENING NEWS. THAT REPORT ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF ANOTHER VIETNAM VET, JOHN P. WHEELER, III. JACK WHEELER HAD EARLIER LED AN EFFORT TO ESTABLISH THE SOUTHEAST ASIA MEMORIAL AT WEST POINT, HIS ALMA MATER. JACK RECRUITED OTHER VETERANS TO JOIN THE EFFORTS JAN SCRUGGS AND BOB DOUBEK HAD BEGUN.

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IT WAS AT THIS TIME THAT I FIRST BECAME INVOLVED WITH THESE THREE REMARKABLE INDIVIDUALS. THE RESULT OF OUR COLLABORATIONS WAS THAT ON NOVEMBER 8, 1979, SENATOR MATHIAS AND I INTRODUCED S.J.RES.119, AUTHORIZING TWO ACRES OF LAND IN CONSTITUTION GARDENS NEAR THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL TO BE USED AS THE SITE FOR THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL. JAN, BOB, JACK HAD PUSHED THE IDEA OF THE MEMORIAL DESIGN AS A REFLECTIVE, CONTEMPLATIVE ONE, THAT WOULD BE HARMONIOUS WITH THE PRESTIGE OF ITS LOCATION NEAR THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL, AND WITH THE ENVIRONMENT GENERALLY.

BY JULY 1, 1980, PRESIDENT CARTER HAD SIGNED THIS AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION INTO LAW. MOST STORIES OF THIS KIND ARE EXPECTED TO END THERE. YET, FOR THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL, THIS WAS ANOTHER BEGINNING.

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IT WAS MY EXTREME PLEASURE TO BE PART OF THAT GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS WHO RESOLVED MATTERS OF THE DESIGN SO THAT, ON NOVEMBER 13, 1982, THE DREAM THAT JAN SCRUGGS MENTIONED TO BOB DOUBEK, AND TO WHICH MILLIONS OF AMERICANS HAD NOW CONTRIBUTED TO AND SHARED, COULD TAKE PLACE. AS THE COMMITTEE WELL KNOWS, THE MEMORIAL WAS DEDICATED ON NOVEMBER 13, 1982, TO MEMORIALIZE THE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WHO LOST THEIR LIVES FOLLOWING THE ORDERS OF THE COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES.

MR. CHAIRMAN, I KNOW THAT MOST OF MY TESTIMONY IS ALREADY IN THE COMMITTEE'S RECORD. BUT AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW OUR APPRECIATION FOR THE EFFORTS OF THESE FINE AMERICANS CANNOT BE BY-PASSED. THESE THREE RECIPIENTS HOLD THESE MEDALS AS TRUSTEES FOR ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN CREATING THIS MEMORIAL. THIS MEMORIAL WAS BORN OUT OF CONTROVERSY, IT WAS DESIGNED IN CONTROVERSY, AND SHALL EXIST FOREVER IN CONTROVERSY. BUT IT SHALL ALWAYS OVERCOME SUCH CONTROVERSY, AND REMAIN AS A TESTAMENT TO THE FORESIGHT OF THESE THREE MEN AND THOUSANDS OF OTHERS WHO WORKED UNDER THEIR LEADERSHIP TO MAKE IT A REALITY.

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Chairman ANNUNZIO. I express my appreciation to you, Senator, for appearing before the subcommittee and for an excellent statement. I want to thank all of you for being here today.

Congressman Mitchell.

Mr. MITCHELL. I merely wanted to make an apology for being late. I commute from Baltimore to Washington every day, and there was a jam-up on the parkway this morning of monumental proportions. I wanted to make my apologies to the subcommittee and to you for being late.

Obviously, I am totally committed to this effort. I think it must be done.

Chairman ANNUNZIO. Would my colleagues hold up for a minute?

Congressman Ridge, from Pennsylvania, is here. As you know, earlier, I made a statement that I would protect his right. Before we ask if there are any questions to be asked of our witnesses, are you ready to proceed with your opening statement?

Mr. RIDGE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the indulgence of my colleagues. Mr. Chairman, let me begin by expressing my appreciation to you and the subcommittee for the opportunity to speak on this sensitive and most important matter.

As you know, I am a Vietnam veteran and I count among my friends others who served honorably and well in Southeast Asia, many of whom still bear the physical and psychological scars of that experience, and some who are listed on the rollcall of the dead, inscribed on the walls of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

So it is with deep personal and, admittedly, an emotional perspective that I approach any matter related to Vietnam veterans, particularly those actions or events which will reflect directly on the integrity of those who gave their blood and, too often, their lives in the service of the country.

In the past, for more than a decade, Vietnam veterans as a group were among the most reviled in our society. Routinely portrayed in the press, television, books and motion pictures as an assortment of criminals, drug addicts, sociopaths and barbaric mercenaries, it is little wonder that the Vietnam veterans were pariahs, outcasts in the very country that they had selflessly served.

In recent years, those characterizations, quite frankly, slanderous portrayals, have abated somewhat and with that has come a shift in public perception of the Vietnam veteran.

Few will argue that this change in attitude is due largely to the quiet assimilation of Vietnam veterans in every quarter of American society, where their achievements, frequently remarkable successes have earned for them the respect and the admiration of those who once viewed them with suspicion if not outright contempt.

Today, we see Vietnam vets holding important leadership positions in business, government, law, medicine, and any number of other occupations, providing a vital link with the past and working toward the future as individuals and leaders in communities across this country.

As any Vietnam vet will tell you, Mr. Chairman, these gains in public confidence did not come easily, nor were they the result of

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any sweeping changes in media attitudes toward Vietnam or those who fought there.

Indeed, many journalists, academics, and other so-called opinion-makers who created the fiction of Vietnam vets as a bedraggled mob of social misfits still cling to those notions and would seize upon any incident, no matter how insignificant or anomylous to re-propagate such myths.

Napoleon's cynical observation that history is nothing more than lies agreed upon is a bitter lesson most Vietnam veterans were forced to learn first hand. But, through that experience, they also found that, with diligence, tenacity, and quiet courage, they could set the record straight to the custodians of not only their own place in history, but the honor of their fallen brothers as well.

It is this responsibility to preserve vigilantly the integrity and dignity of those who served that causes me to question both the propriety and the wisdom of singling out any Vietnam veteran for the honor which we are considering here today.

Briefly, Mr. Chairman, I will summarize my concerns and trust they may be addressed by some of the witnesses.

First, there is the matter of qualifications. A review of the history of the congressional gold medal and its recipients reveals a pattern of criteria which would be difficult to ignore. From George Washington and John Paul Jones to the Wright Brothers, Thomas Edison, Dr. Jonas Salk, the prerequisites for such an honor are distinguished service, valor, extraordinary achievements and the arts and sciences and humanitarian activities.

Many past gold medal recipients, great Americans like President Truman, Robert Kennedy, Senator Hubert Humphrey, were cited after their deaths, and only after a lifetime of public service and selfless dedication.

Do the proposed nominees, Messrs. Scruggs, Wheeler, and Doubek measure up to any of these standards?

With all due respect to their contribution, I believe the answer is no.

Then there is the matter of personal gain. From the few public records I have seen, at least two of the nominees, Mr. Scruggs and Mr. Doubek, were well paid for their services out of contributions running into high, and suggest the six figure range.

I understand that these men continue to receive financial compensation even after leaving the fund, and have profited handsomely from their affiliation with the memorial.

So there is no misunderstanding, I am not suggesting there is anything illegal, underhanded, or improper about the pay or the compensation these men received for their services. I only wish to raise the point that this was not strictly a philanthropic endeavor.

The memorial was built, to quote Mr. Scruggs, "through the contributions of thousands of veterans and families."

No small portion of course went to pay the salary of Mr. Scruggs and others.

I would also note that while many people did donate their time and services without thought of payment, none of the names of those volunteers are before us for consideration today.

On the same general issue, I am concerned about the precedent, Mr. Chairman. To my knowledge, no architect or artist who de-

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signed or erected a memorial, much less served as administrators for a memorial fund, has ever been proposed for any such honors.

In a city like Washington, awash in national monuments and memorials, that represents a fairly significant pattern. To just take one of those memorials, the Marine Corps Iwo Jima Memorial, from what I have read, that monument and even the ground it is situated on was paid for through donations of veterans and their families. None of those involved in its creation, including the sculptor, received any financial compensation for their work. All were volunteers.

Again, I'm not casting aspersions on the nominees here today; rather my question is: How do we justify citations in this instance and ignore all the rest?

What do we say to the hundreds of good men and women who selflessly gave of their time and their talents so that those who died defending this country would not be forgotten?

Better yet, what is a memorial supposed to honor? Those who built it? Or those for whom it was built?

Which brings me to my final point, Mr. Chairman. Today, in this country, there are tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans whose daily lives, whose very existence are literally profiles in courage. Some are confined to wheelchairs, some strapped to artificial limbs.

Still others continue to struggle with invisible but no less debilitating moods. In war, all sacrificed much for a country which showed little or no gratitude. Now, in peace, many quietly continue to their families, communities and Nation without regard for riches or recognition. Valor, selfless dedication, patriotism, by any standard, each of these men, the combat veterans of Southeast Asia, would more than qualify them for a congressional gold medal.

And perhaps that is what should be under consideration today. But what of those who paid the ultimate price for their country? The more than 58,000 men and women who died in Vietnam.

Shouldn't they also be recognized?

None of us here would disagree that the country and Congress owe much to Vietnam veterans, all Vietnam veterans. And that debt, if you will, also includes preserving their honor and their dignity.

It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that by singling out one, two, or three men, whose actions, while commendable, were well-compensated, mocks the notion of self-sacrifice and does a disservice to all Vietnam veterans.

I thank the chairman.

Chairman ANNUNZIO. Thank you, Mr. Ridge.

Mr. Hiler, any questions?

Mr. HILER. No, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ANNUNZIO. Mr. Mitchell, any questions?

Mr. MITCHELL. No questions.

Chairman ANNUNZIO. Mr. Barnard.

Mr. BARNARD. No questions.

Chairman ANNUNZIO. Mr. Ridge.

Mr. RIDGE. No questions.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Chairman, may I make a comment?

Mr. Chairman, I have the deepest respect for my friend Tom Ridge. He spent time in combat during the heaviest part of the

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war, and if anybody has a right to speak on this issue in this Congress, it is him. He has conducted himself on this issue and the issue of Vietnam veterans with distinction, and I have the utmost respect for him. I would like to just point out, and mention a couple of things with regard to his statement.

We have honored, I think, somewhere in the neighborhood of 40 people since World War II, who have received medals, and almost all that I am aware of have received salaries or compensation in connection with the achievements for which those medals were received.

Mr. Scruggs I do not believe received compensation. That was not in keeping with the achievements and the responsibilities that he had. His highest salary, I believe, was $35,000 a year.

Mr. Doubek's annual salary over the—I think it was 43 months of employment—was roughly $38,000 a year. In comparison to a GS-13 as of October 1982, they received $39,000 a year, and Bob was a GS-13 in 1977.

Both had to supervise people who were highly paid and responsible for raising and spending literally millions of dollars.

The war—and I think Tom may agree with me on this—was probably, other than the Civil War, one of the most divisive events in American history, and I think the achievement here was the ability of these three gentlemen to unite the country and heal the wounds, and in doing that, I think they not only did a great service to their country but they recognized in a very profound and important way those 58,000 individuals that we both referred to in our statements.

So it is with those sentiments and feelings that I would hope—and those understandings of your concern, Tom, because I think they are felt deeply and profoundly—that I hope that this subcommittee will look seriously and positively upon this legislation.

I thank you.

Chairman ANNUNZIO. Thank you, Mr. Bonior.

We will hear from our second panel: Mrs. Emogene Cupp, legislative chairman of the American Gold Star Mothers; Gordon R. Thorson, special assistant to the national legislative service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Gen. Michael S. Davison, USA (Ret.), member of the National Advisory Board of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund; Senior Master Sgt. John N. Means, Headquarters, D.C. Air National Guard.

Would you take your seat?

I welcome the four distinguished panelists this morning before this subcommittee.

Mrs. Cupp, if you have a prepared statement, without objection, your entire statement will be made part of the record, and you can summarize your statement.

I would like to give each of you 5 minutes. If you need a couple more minutes, I am not going to penalize you, but I am trying to set some ground rules before the bells ring.

Mrs. Cupp, without objection, your statement will be made part of the record.

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STATEMENT OF EMOGENE CUPP, LEGISLATIVE CHAIRMAN, AMERICAN GOLD STAR MOTHERS, INC.

Mrs. CUPP. Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee. I am Emogene Cupp, legislative chairman of the American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.

We are here in support of H.R. 2591, the bill to award gold medals to Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek, and John Wheeler. We thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The American Gold Star Mothers, founded in 1928, is an organization of mothers whose sons or daughters have given their lives in military service to our country.

My own son, Robert William Cupp, gave his life as an Army infantryman in Vietnam on the 6th of June 1968.

From the beginning of the effort for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the American Gold Star Mothers provided our unqualified support. For a mother, the loss of a son in a war is an extremely sorrowful experience, and the recognition of one's country is significant in support to a grieving family. That is why the creation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was so intensely meaningful for us.

When the divisiveness of the war was finally over, our country seemed to want to suppress all thoughts of it and the sacrifices of those who served seemed forgotten. We, the families, took solace in our memories and in our pride that our sons and daughters had done their duty as they saw fit.

The dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982, however, was a turning point in our country's attitude. Americans became aware of the gratitude due the Vietnam veterans, who at long last really came home.

I knew that my son's sacrifices had finally been acknowledged by his countrymen.

In just 3½ years, the memorial has become a catalyst for a national reconciliation and the only universally accepted symbol for the Vietnam era. For Vietnam veterans, the memorial is their special place to go.

The creation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was an extraordinary achievement. It was dedicated just 3½ years after the incorporation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund as a private nonprofit corporation.

VVMF was granted a 2-acre site at the most prominent location in the Nation's Capital, and conducted the largest design competition ever held in the United States. It raised over $9 million from the American people. No government funds were appropriated.

While caring Americans helped create the memorial, three men—Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek, and John Wheeler—were indispensable. In their early, constant, and total dedication to the cause, these three stood head and shoulders above all others.

Jan Scruggs, a wounded and decorated former infantryman, conceived the idea of the memorial and founded the VVMF. He has continually served as its president. From the beginning he worked tirelessly to promote the idea of the memorial. He wrote articles and letters for publication. He enlisted the support of Congressmen and Government officials. He secured many major contributions.

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Overnight Jan became versed in the media and effectively served as VVMF's spokesman. Jan's philosophy of caring for the veterans was perhaps the most important element of the memorial effort.

Robert Doubek, an attorney, became the first full-time employee of the fledgling VVMF organization at half his previous salary. He successfully transformed VVMF from an idea to a movement.

Bob coordinated passage of the authorizing legislation and initiated the direct mail fundraising campaign. As project director, he directed the design competition, superintended the Federal approval of the design, organized the design and construction team, and oversaw the timely completion of the memorial.

Bob was personally responsible for verifying the completeness and accuracy of the names inscribed on the walls. He was the workhorse of the effort.

John Wheeler, chairman of the VVMF's Board of Directors, volunteered thousands of hours on the project and recruited many other volunteers who have served as directors and advisers. His adept political and managerial decisions were crucial.

For Jack, the personal burden of the project included facing raw anger and attempts at intimidation from opponents of the design. Jack has been the memorial fund's spiritual leader and has always ensured that the spiritual goal of reconciliation of the Nation was not lost amid the rancor of the moment.

By releasing a great amount of suppressed anger and hurt left over from the Vietnam war, the memorial effort could not help but itself become a lightning rod and sometimes a target for these tremendous emotions. Much of the ferment swirled around the competition winning design. The designs quite dignified message of honor and respect for all who served was unequivocal, but angry attacks, often based upon inaccurate press reports, continued.

Jan Scruggs, Bob Doubek, and John Wheeler were called upon to bear the brunt of this emotion.

A small but politically connected group attempted to block construction of the memorial. Having failed, they turned to baseless allegations against the character and integrity of the memorial fund and its leaders themselves.

These attacks culminated in a series aired on a Washington television station during Veterans' Day Week in November 1983. As a result, the General Accounting Office undertook a lengthy investigation, which found that not only was there complete financial integrity but that the memorial fund had done a remarkable job of managing the project and accounting for its funds. The TV station later apologized.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial has truly captivated the soul of our Nation. It is now the most visited shrine in our Nation's Capital. Almost 25 million have now visited the memorial site. That is 1 American in 10.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is truly a contribution to the history of our country. The American Gold Star Mothers believe that if ever the recognition offered by the congressional gold medal was deserved, it is as deserved by Jan Scruggs, Bob Doubek, and John Wheeler for their leading role in creating the memorial.

We believe that our country as a whole shares our belief and our gratitude.

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The leadership provided by Jan, Bob, and John was an extraordinary act of pure public service. Their work is now part of our national history and culture.

We urge you to approve H.R. 2591.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Cupp follows:]

[The extraneous material included in Mrs. Cupp's testimony is available at the subcommittee office.]

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American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT
Nora J. Golsh

ORGANIZED JUNE 4 1928
INCORPORATED JANUARY 5 1929
CHARTERED BY CONGRESS JUNE 12 1984
FOUNDED BY GRACE DARLING DEBOLD

TELEPHONE 202 – 265-6280
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
2128 LEROY PLACE N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

STATEMENT OF THE
AMERICAN GOLD STAR MOTHERS, INC.
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND COINAGE
IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 2591
MAY 20, 1986

I am Eugene Cupp and I am Legislative Chairman of The American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. ("AGSM"). My written statement is submitted on behalf of AGSM in support of H.R. 2591, the bill to award Congressional gold medals to Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek and John Wheeler, for their leadership in creating the Vietnam Veterans Memorial for the nation.

The American Gold Star Mothers, founded in 1928, is an organization of women whose sons have given their lives in military service to our country. My own son, Robert William Cupp, gave his life as an Army infantryman in Vietnam on June 6, 1968. He was not yet twenty-one years old.

From the beginning of the effort for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the American Gold Star Mothers provided our unqualified support. We made our views known to the Congress in supporting the legislation to authorize the land for the Memorial, we provided what funds we could from our limited resources, and many of us volunteered our personal time and efforts in a wide-ranging variety of administrative and fund-raising tasks. To a mother, the loss of a son is an extremely sorrowful experience, especially when he has been far away from his home. In such cases, the recognition and approbation of one's country has special significance in supporting a family in its grief. That is why, for us Vietnam Gold Star Mothers, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was so intensely meaningful.

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It goes without saying that the Vietnam War was an intensely divisive experience for our country. In Vietnam, our casualties mounted to over 58,000 brave men and women. At home, friends and families were divided by the bitter debate over the wisdom of our national policy in pursuing the war. When the war was finally over, our country, in its relief, seemed to want to suppress all thoughts of the war. In that haste, the sacrifices of the veterans and of those who died and remained missing seemed forgotten. We, the families, took solace in our memories and in our pride that our sons and daughters had done their duty as they saw fit.

The dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982, however, was the turning point, not only in my family, but in our country as a whole regarding attitudes toward that long and bitter conflict. Not only did awareness of the gratitude due to Vietnam veterans become part of the national consciousness (See Attachment A), but perhaps as a result, the feelings of alienation among the veterans themselves at long last began to dissolve (Attachment B). The memorial indeed carried a healing power to many wounded hearts (Attachment C). With my son's name forever engraved in stone on the National Mall, alongside our country's most hallowed shrines, I knew that his sacrifice had finally been acknowledged by his countrymen, and that millions of caring Americans shared the grief that my family had borne in private (Attachment D).

In the three and one-half years that have ensued since its dedication and the first National Salute to Vietnam Veterans, the memorial has been a catalyst for tremendous national reconciliation, but, moreover, it has become the only universally accepted symbol for what was perhaps the most divisive period in our history since the Civil War. As an example, the covers of the special commemorative issues published by, among others, The New York Times, The Chicago Tribune, Time and Newsweek magazines on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the fall of Saigon all included images of the quiet dignified rows of names from the memorial's walls (Attachment E). For Vietnam veterans, the memorial has become their special place to go (Attachment F).

The creation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was an extraordinary achievement. In a city still struggling to suitably commemorate President Franklin Roosevelt, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated just over three and

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one-half years after the incorporation on April 27, 1979, of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc. ("VVMF") as a non-profit, privately supported, charitable entity. The statue and the remaining elements were completed just two years later. With only an idea whose time had come, VVMF's founders put together an efficient, dynamic organization, which initially relied solely on volunteer effort. VVMF's founders realized that the manner in which this memorial would be created was perhaps as important as the memorial itself. They eschewed all political statements about the war. In uniting the country in honoring the veterans, they hoped to help reconcile the divisions caused by the war (Attachment H).

They created a model organization. Strict procedures for the receipt, accounting and expenditure of funds were instituted. Boards of directors and advisors, consisting primarily of Vietnam veterans with degrees in law, business and accounting, made sure that decisions were made on a business-like basis.

Capturing the imagination of the Congress, VVMF received approval for a two-acre site at the most prominent location in the Nation's Capital (Attachment I). All 100 Senators were co-sponsors. The national competition through which the design was selected attracted 1,421 entries, making it the largest such competition ever held in the United States and Western Europe (Attachment J). A totally new technology was found and put into production to inscribe the nearly 58,000 names, and a job originally estimated to require years was done in three months. Starting with no funds of its own, VVMF raised over $9,000,000 from unions, corporations, foundations, and veterans' organizations, and most importantly from individual Americans. No government funds were appropriated. Construction was completed on time and within budget. Likewise, the creation and casting of the sculpture was completed in the remarkable time of just over two years.

One of my fondest memories was the day in 1979, early in the memorial effort, that Jan Scruggs and Bob Doubek came to Gold Star Mothers headquarters to explain to us the concept of the enormous project that they had undertaken. The mothers assembled embraced them and the memorial effort with all our hearts, and in the ensuing years I was privileged, as a volunteer for VVMF, to

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observe the tremendous courage, determination and self sacrifice exhibited by all involved, and especially Jan Scruggs, Bob Doubek and John Wheeler. While the memorial could not have been created the active support of hundreds of caring Americans, there were three — Jan Scruggs, Bob Doubek and John Wheeler — who were indispensable. In their early, constant, and total dedication to the cause the three stood head and shoulders above all others in their contribution.

As is well known, Jan Scruggs, a wounded and decorated former infantryman, who at the age of 19 had seen half his company killed or wounded, conceived of the idea of the memorial as a means of healing the tremendous hurt suffered by the veterans and of reconciling the divisions in the country caused by the war. He founded VVMF, and he has continually served as its president from April 1979 to the present, first as a volunteer, from February 1981 in a full-time capacity, and again as a volunteer from January 1985. From the beginning he worked tirelessly to promote the idea of the memorial, and to enlist the support of Americans of all walks of life in the effort. He wrote numerous articles and letters for publication in major newspapers and periodicals (Attachment K). He enlisted the support of members of Congress, key government officials and business leaders. He personally secured many major contributions. With no prior experience Jan had to become versed in the workings of the media virtually overnight, and he has continuously and effectively served as VVMF's spokesman. Jan's philosophy of ending rancor and caring for the veterans was perhaps the most important element of the memorial effort.

Robert Doubek was a co-founder of the VVMF. An attorney, at the time with five years experience in corporate, construction and procurement law, Bob assumed great risk by becoming the first full-time employee of the fledgling VVMF organization, only seven months after its founding and at half his previous salary. As executive director, he was the sole salaried staff member for over nine months. Through coordination of volunteer staff and enormous individual effort, he successfully transformed VVMF from an idea to a movement. He secured the support of the major veterans organizations and coordinated passage of the authorizing legislation. He initiated the direct-mail fundraising campaign and directed the design competition. As project director, he superintended the federal approval of the design, organized the design and

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construction team, and oversaw the timely completion of the memorial. He was responsible for verifying the completeness and accuracy of the names inscribed on the walls and originated the name locator directories and the National Park Service volunteer guide program. Finally, he organized and managed the Memorial's dedication ceremony and many other public events.

John Wheeler, chairman of VVMF's board of directors, gave several thousand hours of volunteer time to the project. He recruited many of the volunteers who have served as directors and advisors. His adept political and managerial decisions were crucial in steering VVMF through many treacherous shoals. He had to spend many nights on the phone and much time away from his family in order to get the job done. For Jack, the project was a great personal burden. It included facing raw anger and attempts at intimidation from opponents of the design. Everyone who visits the memorial owes Jack a debt of gratitude for his perseverance and unselfishness and for the sacrifices he made in order to honor the men and women who served in Vietnam. When first told abut the dream of a memorial, he said, "It can be done. Let me call some people." He is a West Pointer, and he made his words come true. His book, Touched with Fire: The Future of the Vietnam Generation, is provocative and important. Jack has been the Memorial Fund's spiritual leader and has always insured that the spiritual goal of the healing and reconciliation of the nation was not lost among the rancor and passion of the moment.

By releasing the great amount of suppressed anger and hurt left over from the Vietnam war, the memorial effort could not help but itself become a lightning rod and sometimes a target for these tremendous emotions (Attachment L). Many misread the purity of the effort. Groups with axes to grind accused it, on one hand, of attempting to validate, and on the other hand to denigrate, U.S. policy in Vietnam. Much of the ferment swirled around the quiet competition-winning design. While some felt that the memorial design should dictate to visitors a set interpretation of the legacy of the war (Attachment M), the quiet reflective design allowed for expression of the multitude of feelings which had accompanied the country's involvement in Vietnam. The design's quiet dignified message of honor and respect for all who served was unequivocal, but angry attacks, often based upon inaccurate press reports,

continued. Jan Scruggs, Bob Doubek and John Wheeler were called upon to bear the brunt of this emotion (Attachment N).

Although the design was widely accepted by the American people, including such organizations as The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Vietnam Veterans of America, a small but politically connected group attempted to block its construction and then to dictate their preferred political solution to the question of the location of the statue and the flagstaff. Failing in these attempts, they turned to vague, baseless and unfounded allegations against the character and integrity of the Memorial Fund and its leaders themselves. These attacks culminated in a series aired on Washington's WDVM TV Channel 9 during Veterans Day week in November of 1983, in which only opponents, and no supporters of the Memorial design, were presented as "objective" witnesses to the alleged financial improprieties (Attachment O). As a result, at the urging of both the Memorial Fund and many members of Congress the General Accounting Office undertook a lengthy investigation, which found that not only was there complete financial integrity, but that the Memorial Fund had done a remarkable job of managing the project and accounting for its funds (Attachment P). WDVM TV later apologized on the air and made a substantial contribution to VVMF (Attachment Q).

Whatever rancor was involved in its creation, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has truly captivated the soul of our nation (Attachment R). It is now the most visited shrine in our Nation's Capital. Almost twenty-five million people have now visited the memorial site, one American in ten. It is a focal point of print, television and movie scripts. It has served as a catalyst for similar efforts to honor and recognize Vietnam veterans on a state and local basis. The first major national memorial to be established in Washington since before World War II, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is truly a contribution to the history of our country. The American Gold Star Mothers believe that if ever the recognition offered by the Congressional Gold Medal was deserved, it is deserved by Jan Scruggs, Bob Doubek, and John Wheeler for their leading role in giving the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to our country.

We note that the Gold Medals awarded to Ben Abruzzo, Maxie Anderson and Larry Newman in 1979 for their feat of crossing the Atlantic Ocean in a balloon

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establish a firm precedent for the award of medals to more than one individual for a single achievement. This notwithstanding, it would be simply unfair to deny any of these three men his due recognition on the grounds that others were being similarly honored. While Jan Scruggs, Bob Doubek and John Wheeler stood head and shoulders above all in their contributions to the cause, none of the three so overshadowed the other two.

We further believe that the fact that Bob Doubek and Jan Scruggs were salaried staff members during portions of the time in which they accomplished this achievement should likewise not be cause to deny them this honor. Both made enormous contributions of time as volunteers. Both took substantial risks in spending some of the most productive years of their working lives in the memorial effort. Neither received a salary that was commensurate with his actual responsibilities. We note that of the thirty-nine individuals awarded Congressional Gold Medals from the end of World War II until May 1984, almost all received the awards for achievements done as part of duties for which they were salaried or compensated.

We are including for the record two articles, from the National Geographic, and The Retired Officer which tell the memorial story and that of Jan, Bob and Jack in greater detail (Attachment S). We request the opportunity to supplement the record, if in the hearing further material appears to be relevant.

In conclusion, The American Gold Star Mothers are extremely grateful to all who made the Vietnam Veterans Memorial a reality, but especially to Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek and John Wheeler, each of whom was indispensable. We believe that our country as a whole shares our gratitude. Their leadership of the effort was an extraordinary act of pure public service, and after only a few years, their work has become part of our national history and culture. We urge you to approve H.R. 2591, and we have no objection to your reporting of the Senate version of this measure if such will speed final passage by the Congress.

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Chairman ANNUNZIO. Thank you, Mrs. Cupp, for your statement.

Our next witness is Gordon R. Thorson, special assistant for national legislative service of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Mr. Thorson has a prepared statement. Your entire statement will be made part of the record. Proceed in your own manner for about 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF GORDON R. THORSON, SPECIAL ASSISTANT, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SERVICE, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. THORSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee.

I wish to thank the subcommittee for inviting the Veterans of Foreign Wars to appear today and give testimony on H.R. 2591. We are proud to give our support to this deserving piece of legislation.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is comprised of men and women who have served their country during time of war. World War I veterans, World War II veterans, Korean veterans, and Vietnam veterans have joined together to form a united membership of over 2 million strong; 700,000 Vietnam veterans belong to our great organization, and they now play a significant role in determining the direction of the VFW.

Many of these same Vietnam veteran members, with the support of the entire VFW organization and auxiliary, took part in the fundraising drive that eventually raised over a quarter of a million dollars toward the construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The memorial is dedicated to those Americans who served and to those who died in the Vietnam war. It is felt that the memorial has had a positive impact on the way the people of our Nation now view the veterans of Vietnam.

Americans can now better understand the sacrifices made in the cause of freedom because the memorial recognizes the Vietnam veteran and the price that was paid. This recognition has aided in overcoming the once negative image of the Vietnam veteran and has significantly increased chances of readjustment and reintegration into society.

Jan C. Scruggs, John P. Wheeler, and Robert W. Doubek joined forces to initiate the memorial project. They joined to fight the many necessary battles and to see the successful completion of their goal.

Because the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is now in place and has done so much to reunite our Nation, the VFW believes a congressional gold medal should be struck to commemorate the exemplary service these three gentlemen have rendered to our Nation and to all Vietnam veterans.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Thorson on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States follows:]

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VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

STATEMENT OF

GORDON R. THORSON, SPECIAL ASSISTANT
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SERVICE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND COINAGE
COMMITTEE ON BANKING, FINANCE AND URBAN AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WITH RESPECT TO

LEGISLATION WHICH AUTHORIZES THE STRIKING OF SPECIAL CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDALS TO JAN SCRUGGS, ROBERT DOUBEK, AND JACK WHEELER
(H.R. 2591)

WASHINGTON, D. C. MAY 20, 1986

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

I wish to thank this Subcommittee for inviting the Veterans of Foreign Wars to appear today and give testimony on H.R. 2591. We are proud to give our support to this deserving piece of legislation.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is comprised of men and women who have served their country during time of war. World War I, World War II, Korean and Vietnam veterans have joined together to form a united VFW membership of over two million veterans. Seven hundred thousand Vietnam veterans belong to our great organization and they now play a significant role in determining the direction of the VFW.

Many of these same Vietnam-veteran members, with the support of the entire VFW organization and Auxiliary, took part in the fundraising drive that eventually raised over one-quarter of a million dollars towards the construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★
VFW MEMORIAL BUILDING ● 200 MARYLAND AVENUE, N.E. ● WASHINGTON, D. C. 20002 - 5799 ● AREA CODE 202-543-2239

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The memorial was completed and opened to the public in November of 1982. A bronze flagpole with a statue of three soldiers has recently been added to the site. The memorial is dedicated to those Americans who served and to those who died in the Vietnam war. It is felt that the memorial has had a positive impact on the way that the people of our nation now view the veterans of Vietnam. Americans can now better understand the sacrifices made in the cause of freedom. Because the memorial recognizes the Vietnam veteran and the price that was paid, this recognition has aided in overcoming the once negative image of the Vietnam veteran and significantly increased chances of readjustment and reintegration into society.

Ian C. Scruggs, John P. Wheeler and Robert W. Doubek joined forces to initiate the memorial project, to fight the many necessary battles, and to see the successful completion of their goal. Because the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is now in place and has done so much to reunite our nation, the VFW believes a Congressional Gold Medal should be struck to commemorate the exemplary service these three gentlemen have rendered to our nation and to Vietnam veterans.

This concludes my statement. Thank you.

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Chairman ANNUNZIO. I thank you, Mr. Thorson, for your statement.

Our next witness is Gen. Michael S. Davison, member of the national advisory board of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

You have a prepared statement, and without objection, your entire statement will be made part of the record, and you can proceed in your own manner.

STATEMENT OF GEN. MICHAEL S. DAVISON, USA (RET.), MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND

General DAVISON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before this subcommittee to present a statement on behalf of Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek, and John Wheeler and in support of H.R. 2591.

As a member of the national advisory board of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, I was privileged to have a close association with these three veterans, the leaders of a truly remarkable service to our country in the creation of a memorial to Vietnam veterans, living and dead.

What I have to say to you today is drawn in part from the letter I wrote to John Wheeler April 5, 1983. My initial and most lasting impression from my association with VVMF and its multitude of Vietnam veteran supporters has to do with the Vietnam veteran himself, as represented by those in VVMF, and by the many with whom I came in contact at numerous meetings and conferences.

In these contacts I found reassurance. I found men in the forefront of the emerging leadership generation of this country, men who had responded to their country's call, who had gone to a strange and distant land, who had served in often hazardous conditions, and who had returned with a pride and a dignity which they have retained to this day in spite of many frustrations. I found these to be men with a strong sense of citizenship.

My exposure to these veterans was personally inspirational. I had in effect closed the door on my Vietnam experience in sorrow of the waste of lives, talent and resources in what should not have been a lost cause.

But I discovered in VVMF and its supporters a strength of purpose, a devotion to country and a love of fellow man that can only bode well for the future of our country.

As I say, I was inspired and I remain so. At the same time, I must say in all candor that I was distressed by some of the critics of the memorial, whose bombastic rhetoric garnered news media attention and governmental notice far beyond that which they deserved, and whose motivation often seemed self-serving.

On the other hand, there were critics who were battle-tested veterans whose sincerity I do not question and for whom I have the greatest respect.

In the face of the totality of this criticism, that VVMF, its leaders and its supporting organizations representing the vast majority of veterans prevailed is a testimonial to the steadfast VVMF lead-

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ership and its devotion to the principles it set forth at the beginning of its crusade.

It is impossible for me to speak of the memorial without mentioning the statue in the entrance plaza. For anyone who has experienced combat, this sculpture truly reflects that mystic bond of love which ties soldiers together in the face of common danger.

Placing this statute in the entry properly reminds visitors that the American soldier has always been and will continue to be a contributor to the freedom and democracy we and our allies enjoy. Yet, its placement does not detract from the beauty and serenity of the granite walls that honor those who gave their lives in Vietnam in the hope that others might attain freedom and democracy.

I am struck by the commonality of experience of soldiers in close combat, regardless of the political context of the war in which they were engaged. The shared dangers, stresses and strains of fighting remain the same be it World War II, Korea or Vietnam. The bonds of understanding and love that enable men to endure combat are the same. The sacrifices are the same.

This is why, for me, the statute carries special poignancy. The statute speaks to the combat veterans of World War II and Korea as well as Vietnam. It speaks eloquently of service to the country and to the principles and ideals embodied in our Nation.

Much has been written and said of the memorial, testifying to its significance and its beauty. But, what has perhaps been overlooked is the fact that the memorial, by its very existence, speaks of the enduring commitment of the VVMF leadership. Jan Scruggs, Bob Doubek, and John Wheeler were put to the test and proved equal to it. They persevered where others might have weakened. Their convictions gave them courage and determination. And, as a consequence, they have performed a signal service to the people of this country now and forever.

I believe they are deserving of Special Congressional Gold Medals, and I so recommend.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of General Davison follows:]

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STATEMENT BY GENERAL MICHAEL S. DAVISON, USA, RET.
ON
H. R. 2591
TO
HOUSE BANKING FINANCE AND URBAN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE
ON
CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND COINAGE
20 MAY 1986

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee:

I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before this subcommittee to present a statement on behalf of Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek and Jack Wheeler and in support of H. R. 2591.

As a member of the National Advisory Board of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, I was privileged to have a close association with these three veterans, the leaders of a truly remarkable service to our country in the creation of a memorial to Vietnam veterans, living and dead. What I have to say to you today is drawn in part from a letter I wrote to Jack Wheeler 5 April 1983.

My initial and most lasting impression from my association with VVMF and its multitude of Vietnam veteran supporters has to do with the Vietnam veteran himself as represented by those in VVMF and by the many with whom I came in contact at numerous meetings and conferences. In these contacts I found reassurance. I found men in the forefront of the emerging leadership generation of this country; men who had responded to their country's call, who had gone to a strange and distant land, who had served in often hazardous conditions and who had returned with a pride and a dignity which they have retained to this day in spite of many frustrations. I found these to be men with a strong sense of citizenship.

My exposure to these veterans was personally inspirational. I had, in effect, closed the door on my Vietnam experience in sorrow over the waste of lives, talent and resources in what should not have been a lost cause. But I discovered in VVMF and its supporters a strength of purpose, a devotion to country and a love of fellow man that can only bode well for the future of our country. As I say, I was inspired and I remain so.

At the same time I must say in all candor that I was distressed by some of the critics of the memorial whose bombastic rhetoric garnered news media attention and governmental notice far beyond that which they deserved and whose motivation often

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seemed self-serving. That VVMF and its supporting organizations representing the vast majority of veterans prevailed is a testimonial to the steadfast VVMF leadership and its devotion to the principles it set forth at the beginning of its crusade.

It is impossible for me to speak of the memorial without mentioning the statue in the entrance plaza. For anyone who has experienced combat, this sculpture truly reflects that mystic bond of love which ties soldiers together in the face of common danger. Placing this statue in the entry properly reminds visitors that the American soldier has always been and will continue to be a contributor to the freedom and democracy we and our allies enjoy. Yet its placement does not detract from the beauty and serenity of the granite walls that honor those who gave their lives in Vietnam in the hope that others might attain freedom and democracy.

I am struck by the commonality of experience of soldiers in close combat regardless of the political context of the war in which they were engaged. The shared dangers, stresses and strains of fighting remain the same be it WWII, Korea or Vietnam. The bonds of understanding and love that enable men to endure combat are the same. The sacrifices are the same. This is why, for me, the statue carries special poignancy. The statue speaks to the combat veterans of WWII and Korea as well as Vietnam. It speaks eloquently of service to country and to the principles and ideals embodied in our nation.

Much has been written of the memorial testifying to its significance and its beauty. But what has been, perhaps, overlooked is the fact that the memorial by its very existence speaks of the enduring commitment of the VVMF leadership. Jan Scruggs, Bob Doubek and Jack Wheeler were put to the test and proved equal to it. They persevered where others might have weakened. Their convictions gave them courage and determination and, as a consequence, they have performed a signal service to the people of this country, now and forever. I believe they are deserving of special Congressional gold medals and I so recommend. Thank you.

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Chairman ANNUNZIO. Thank you very much, General, for your statement.

Our next witness is senior M. Sgt. John N. Means. I know you have a prepared statement. Without objection, your entire statement will be made part of the record and you can proceed in your own manner.

STATEMENT OF SENIOR M. SGT. JOHN N. MEANS HEADQUARTERS, D.C. AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Sergeant MEANS. Thank you, sir. Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, let me say at the outset that, although I am not a Vietnam combat veteran, I was an Air Force Reserve Loadmaster during the Vietnam war and I hauled a lot of cargo in and out of there, including a number of aluminum coffins. I saw the place firsthand and I feel very close to the brave men and women whom the Vietnam Veterans Memorial honors.

I also would like to make it clear that I don't know Mr. Scruggs or the other two gentlemen. I was not involved in any way with the fundraising for the memorial or the various controversies that have sprung up about the memorial and its design.

I am here solely because of my personal admiration for three things:

The young people who fought and died in Vietnam.

The beautiful touching memorial built on the Mall in their honor.

And the three veterans whose determination and hard work made that memorial a reality.

I paid my first visit to the memorial on Veterans Day in 1982. That was the week that it was completed and dedicated. It was a rainy weekend and the walkway in front of the thing wasn't finished, and you had to walk on duck-boards in the mud in front of it. I remember even having to ask where it was because you couldn't even see it from Constitution Avenue.

I don't think I have ever been so moved by anything made of stone and mortar in my life. As Senator Warner said a few minutes ago, it is indeed unique. I stood there and looked at those names, trying to find one or two that I knew, and watched other veterans standing there doing the same things.

Some of them were making tracings of some of the names. Some of the others were crying openly. The Sun came out and you could see the Lincoln Memorial reflected in the polished granite.

I have been back there several times since. They have added the statue, that the General spoke of, of the three soldiers and the flag since then, and I think that's highly appropriate.

I think, before the statue was added, it was a memorial to the 58,000 whose names are in the granite. And, God knows, that was worth doing. But, after the statue, the whole thing belongs to all of us who were there.

I don't think I have ever told this to anybody before, but every time I have gone down there, I have heard C-130 engines running up at Da Nang or Tan Son Nhut. I think other people hear other things, depending on what their memories are.

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I know of no one with any kind of personal involvement with Vietnam who has been to the statue and not been moved profoundly.

The memorial must be seen, must be experienced, to understand what I am talking about. Looking at a picture of it just won't do it at all. But anyone who has been there knows what I am talking about.

Our role in the Vietnam war traumatized this Nation, and whether we had any business being there or not, I am still not prepared to say. But I do believe that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has soothed that trauma and has helped us hold our heads up proudly once again.

That's the healing process Senator Kerry referred to a few moments ago. I also believe that any honor that you gentlemen can give to the people responsible for the concept and the construction of that memorial would be most appropriate, if not overdue.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Sergeant Means follows:]

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STATEMENT
ON STRIKING OF CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDALS
before the
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND COINAGE
of the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON BANKING, FINANCE AND URBAN AFFAIRS
by
SENIOR MASTER SGT. JOHN N. MEANS
HEADQUARTERS, D.C. AIR NATIONAL GUARD
May 20, 1986

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee:

Let me say at the outset, that although I am not a Vietnam combat veteran, I was an Air Force Reserve loadmaster during the Vietnam War, and I hauled a lot of cargo in and out of there -- including a number of aluminum coffins. I saw the place first-hand, and I feel very close to the brave men and women whom the Vietman Veterans Memorial honors.

I would also like to make it clear that I do not know Mr. Scruggs or the other two gentlemen. I was not involved in any way with the fund-raising for the Memorial, and I know nothing of the various controversies that have sprung up about the Memorial and its design. I am here solely because of my personal admiration for three things: the young people who fought and died in Vietnam; the beautiful, touching memorial built on the Mall in their honor; and the veterans whose determination and hard work made that memorial a reality.

I paid my first visit to the Memorial on Veterans' Day 1982, the week it was completed and dedicated. It was rainy, and the walkway in front of it wasn't finished, and you had to walk on duckboards in the mud in front of it -- and I remember having to ask where it was because you couldn't even see it from Constitution Avenue.

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But I don't think I have ever been so moved by anything made of stone and mortar in my life. I stood there and looked at those names, trying to find one or two that I knew, and watched other veterans standing there, doing the same thing. Some of them were making tracings of some of the names; some others were crying openly. The sun came out, and you could see the Lincoln Memorial reflected in the polished granite.

I've been back there several times since. They've added the statue of the three soldiers and the flag since then, and I think that's highly appropriate. I think BEFORE the statue was added it was a memorial to the 58,000 whose names are in the granite, and God knows, that was worth doing. But AFTER the statue the whole thing belonged to all of us, everybody who was ever there.

I don't think I've ever told this to anybody before. Every time I've gone there, I've heard C-130 engines running up at Da Nang or Tan Son Nhut. At first I had to listen carefully to hear them. Last time I was there they were loud and clear.

I think other people hear other things, depending on what their memories are. I know of no one with any kind of personal involvement with Vietnam who has been there and not been moved profoundly. The Memorial must be seen, must be experienced, to understand what I'm talking about. A picture of it won't do it. But anycne who's been there knows what I mean.

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Our role in the V[illegible] War traumatized this nation. And whether we had any business being there or not, I am still not prepared to say. But I do believe that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has soothed that trauma, and has helped us hold our heads up proudly once again.

I also believe that any honor you can give to the people responsible for the concept and the construction of that memorial would be most appropriate, if not overdue.

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Chairman ANNUNZIO. I thank you, Master Sergeant Means, for your excellent statement. I am deeply grateful for the panelists this morning, for their appearance and their statements. We are supportive of what you believe in.

I will ask Mr. Hiler if he has any questions.

Mr. HILER. I have no questions at this time, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ANNUNZIO. Mr. Ridge.

Mr. RIDGE. I have a couple, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ANNUNZIO. Proceed, please.

Mr. RIDGE. In all of your statements, you refer to the sacrifices of those whose names are on the wall, and the fact that finally, after the monument has been built, that the sacrifice is being recognized here in Washington and has facilitated the healing process around the country.

And I would really like to know if you think, while it is a fitting tribute that the memorial itself has caused that to happen, or was the fact that 3 million Vietnam veterans, 500,000 combat veterans, went back to communities across this country, assimilated themselves into the social and economic fabric of this country and through their individual acts in their communities by, with and for their families and for their communities, really as responsible or more responsible for the recognition of this country that the portrayal through the media and by the media over the past several years was inaccurate.

Do you really think it is the monument that has done it, or has it been the acts of heroism that are recorded indeed on that granite, the amputees that have gone back home, the combat soldiers that have gone back home? Is it the granite that has done it or the acts of the 3 million who were assimilated back into their homes, into their communities?

Yes, sir?

Sergeant MEANS. I think the memorial served as a catalyst and a very tangible nucleus for exactly what you are talking about. And perhaps without the memorial, the people around those millions who came home weren't quite ready to listen.

General DAVISON. If I may, Mr. Ridge, I would like to associate myself with the remarks of Sergeant Means. I would like to add to it that I think, in addition to the monument itself acting as a catalyst, the whole process of developing the monument had an impact. The fundraising process had an impact because it brought it to the attention of a wide expanse of American people across the country.

I think also the news media were required to face up to the question of the Vietnam veteran. And I think that, through the news media and the attention that surrounded the building of the monument, the country at large got a clear picture and a more accurate—to address your specific point—a more accurate and true picture of the very nature of the Vietnam veteran and what a really fine American we were talking about.

So, yes, the memorial was a catalyst but the entire process had its impact. And I would not at all disagree with you that the role of the individual veteran, as he went back to his home community, had its impact, too.

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Mr. THORSON. General Davison and Senior Master Sergeant Means have said exactly what I would like to have also said. And I would like to add my agreement to what has been projected.

Mrs. CUPP. I really don't have a lot more to add except that I know every Gold Star Mother is very proud to see their son's name on the monument.

Mr. RIDGE. You should be. The question has been raised that these gentlemen singlehandedly or arm-in-arm fought against some incredible obstacles, criticism, in order to get the monument erected. It is my recollection of the history of the monument that it enjoyed the full support of every branch of Government, the executive and legislative, that the memorial development and dedication took place on schedule, cutting through what normally would have been years of redtape, and that the American public wholeheartedly endorsed the concept and the memorial.

So, recognizing that there was some internal dissent about the design and, in fact, it is my understanding that a couple of the men whom you seek to honor today were opposed to the establishment of the statue with the three soldiers on it, that was part of the internal dispute, what dragons out there were these three men slaying in order to get this memorial built?

General DAVISON. Mr. Ridge, if I may, I think I can address that question in part. As a member of the national advisory board, I was fairly familiar with what was going on, not necessarily on a daily basis, but, a number of times each month as the thing went along.

There was a rather vocal campaign mounted that I think all of us are aware of who followed the television broadcasts and the various articles and newspapers and national magazines concerning the monument.

It would have been, I think, under lesser leadership, easy for the leadership to compromise or perhaps sacrifice what has now proven itself to be a very eloquent memorial. They did not, they persevered.

With respect to the statue specifically, I had a personal role with respect to the statue. The statue entered the picture at the end of a long, and I might say very vociferous conference up here on the Hill that lasted some 5 hours, in which the opponents of the memorial design had marshalled a considerable body of strength from across the country.

But it was clear that in spite of all the invective that went back and forth across the conference table, it was clear that there was one thread of concern that ran through both sides—the pro-Mai Lin design and the anti-Mai Lin design.

That was the concern that all veterans be honored—both those who had sacrificed their lives and those who had been fortunate enough to return from Vietnam. It was at that point that it was proposed that the statue be put into the memorial.

And you are right. There was a little resistance on the part of the VVMF leadership, because they had been locked in pretty tight behind the Mai Lin design. But they did, I think, finally display the excellent judgment of agreeing to the compromise and going ahead. And that's part of leadership. So I commend them for it.

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Mr. RIDGE. I certainly commend them for it as well. I guess the point I was trying to make is that the obstacles that have often been referred to as being almost insurmountable and insuperable in a sense were the legitimate, honest discussions and criticisms among men who were tied together with a common thread of interest, ultimately, to build a memorial.

But I guess the leadership and the good judgment that they showed and the occasional frustration, and perhaps the sleepless nights generated by that discussion, if that were a criterion for the Congressional Medal of Honor, I guarantee you, if it comes to frustration, criticism, and sleepless nights, then my entire staff is entitled to a congressional medal.

General, you indicated, and I as a Vietnam veteran want to thank you for your contribution because I think it is a beautiful memorial, that there were literally hundreds and thousands of contributors and volunteers to the effort. Were these three men aided by a staff in that effort?

General DAVISON. Oh, I think there were lots of volunteers associated with it, Mr. Ridge, and they did indeed have employed staff at VVMF headquarters who worked with them.

But, again, we come down, I think, to the question of leadership, the definition of leadership, which is so vital to assuring the success of this type of process, which was really remarkable when you think about it.

If somebody had said in 1979 that Jan Scruggs, a former rifleman in the 199th Infantry Brigades was going to get 2 acres of land adjacent to the Lincoln Memorial and put up a Vietnam Veterans Memorial on it, you would have laughed at him.

But his leadership and his ability and that of Bob Doubek and John Wheeler brought it off in a remarkably short period of time. Is there any other example around this city of such an accomplishment?

Mr. RIDGE. I guess since you are asking the questions I would be happy to answer.

I do not mean to be impertinent, but I will tell you that I think the fact that the VVMF was able to garner the overwhelming emotional support and project support in the Congress and with the President, and the thousands and thousands who contributed is a reflection not so much of anything other than a national recognition at the time, that the time had come that any kind of tribute, that some kind of tribute was necessary.

I do not denigrate their effort and their commitment to build it. I do not. As a Vietnam veteran, I am proud it is there. I am pleased it is there to recognize the sacrifices of people such as Mrs. Cupp's son and the other 58,000, as well as the monument, the statue to the other almost 3 million men and women who served in combat.

I guess I part company with the need to distinguish their contribution with the others who served, both in country and taking a look at the war records of those who served in country and those who sacrificed as well as those who served to create the memorial.

I thank you for your indulgence.

Chairman ANNUNZIO. Any other questions? Mr. Mitchell, do you have any questions?

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Mr. MITCHELL. No; I don't have a question. I would like to make a comment, though, if I may, and I want to preface it by two brief statements.

I have the honor of being a Purple Heart veteran, and it is an honor. I still have shrapnel in my body today.

Second, a prefatory statement that I want to make is that I was one of those who opposed the war in Vietnam. I have enormous respect for the veterans. I have done all that I can to assist them personally and legislatively, but I thought it was not the right war.

And I tell you, Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee and ladies and gentlemen, I did not reconcile this conflict in myself until I saw the monument. That is when I found some sense of serenity and some sense of peace in terms of almost ambivalent attitudes, based on my own service and based on my feelings against the war.

I think these three people deserve to be recognized because no matter what kind of movement is developed, no matter what kind of consensus might be developed, it takes someone to lead.

As a black man, we often honor King, and everybody was involved in that mighty, titanic civil rights struggle, but it took one man to get out there and lead.

If you look back on history, you will see that time and time again it took one man or one woman or a group of people stepping out to lead, bringing about a consensus, bringing about a movement, and these three people did it.

I hope that we will pass this bill, and that those three will have my everlasting gratitude for allowing me to achieve a sense of inner peace vis-a-vis Vietnam. I achieved it actually only after having seen the monument.

Thank you for allowing me to make this statement.

Chairman ANNUNZIO. Are there any other questions?

[No response.]

Chairman ANNUNZIO. If not, the chairman has an announcement to make.

Under the rules of the subcommittee, it requires 218 Members of Congress to sponsor legislation for the presentation of gold medals. This legislation has received 260 cosponsors. So it has met the requirements under the rules of the Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs and Coinage of the House Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs Committee.

It requires four Members in attendance to mark up a bill, but it also requires seven Members in attendance to constitute a quorum to pass the bill out of subcommittee. The subcommittee this morning does not have the seven Members, but it does have four Members, and we could proceed with the marking up only of the legislation.

If we do that this morning, the Chair would like to announce that he is calling a meeting for Thursday morning at 10 a.m., in which we will attempt to assemble a full quorum so that we can pass the legislation out of the subcommittee.

It is entirely the prerogative of the membership. If there is an objection to marking up the bill—we have four Members—the Chair will hear the objection, and we can mark up the bill on Thursday, and hopefully we will have seven people and pass it out.

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Mr. HILER. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman ANNUNZIO. Mr. Hiler; yes.

Mr. HILER. Mr. Chairman, in light of the testimony this morning and in light of the comments of our colleague Mr. Ridge, in light of the variety of conflicting emotions that have come out this morning, I think we all share support for the memorial and what it represents. I don't think anyone could walk down by that memorial without feeling not only a tinge of, in some cases a lot of, sadness, and also a tinge of pride.

I think that the individuals who are here this morning testifying on behalf of three individuals who were certainly very involved in its construction, certainly it is worthy of this subcommittee's consideration, but I also believe, Mr. Chairman, that it might be wise at this time to table a markup.

I frankly would appreciate that. I think my colleague would.

Chairman ANNUNZIO. You don't have to move to table it. You just object to the suggestion. I will honor your objection.

We will call the next meeting of the subcommittee for Thursday morning, at 10 a.m., and we will go from there.

Is that all right?

I want to express my deep appreciation to the panelists for being here this morning and for your cooperation and your excellent statements.

The subcommittee is now recessed until Thursday morning at 10 a.m., for the purposes of marking up H.R. 2591.

[Whereupon, at 11:25 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair.]

[The following letters were received by the subcommittee for inclusion in the record:]

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14 May 1986

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc
2001 S St., NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20009-1125

(202) 332-2700

The Honorable Frank Annunzio
Chairman, Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs and Coinage
212 House Office Building
Annex 1
300 New Jersey Ave. S.E.
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial has been an extraordinary contribution to the generation of Americans who served their country in the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War. For many years our service was forgotten by a nation that wanted no reminder of the unpopular and very divisive American military involvement in Vietnam. Yet, our country needed to recognize its veterans and mourn its war dead in order to begin recovering from that war.

Vietnam veterans suffered the most from the war. This is undeniable. We returned to high unemployment rates; an inadequate GI Bill and even now have many ongoing concerns such as the future effects of our exposure to Agent Orange and other defoilants used during the conflict.

The creation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, more than any other single event, has brought about public concern and support for resolving the many issues which still plague Vietnam veterans. Further, the creation of the Memorial has given the veterans of Vietnam recognition for their service. Vietnam veterans are no longer afraid to admit their service. Many are now becoming involved in community activities like the chapters of the Vietnam Veterans of America are doing nationwide.

The task of building this Memorial was extraordinary. The project was begun in 1979, a time when America hardly wanted to remember a war that had just ended in 1975. Many hurdles were faced ranging from raising the needed funds to administering the largest design competition ever held in the United States. Furthermore, the sponsors of this project had to fend off vicious personal attacks waged relentlessly by a small group of veterans who are politically well connected, but hopelessly misguided.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a very special gift to our country which has indeed helped enormously to bind the wounds of Vietnam for both the veterans and the nation as a whole. The Vietnam Veterans of America heartily endorses the Congressional Medal of Freedom for the men whose hard work made the Memorial a reality. Jan C. Scruggs, Robert W. Doubek, and John P.Wheeler deserve this honor because their efforts gave our nation an opportunity to heal the wounds of the Vietnam War.

Sincerely,

Robert O. Muller, President
Vietnam Veterans of America

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MAY 23 1986

Brigadier General George B. Price
United States Army
Retired

Honorable Frank Annunzio
Chairman
Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs and Coinage
Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs
Room 212 House Office Building Annex #1
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Annunzio,

This letter is to support without reservation or hesitation the recommendation in legislation (H.R. 2591) to authorize the striking of special gold medals honoring Jan Scruggs, Robert Doubek and Jack Wheeler.

I am a Vietnem Veteran with almost thirty years of active military service, who worked closely as a volunteer with all the nominees. Unfortunately a conflict in my schedule will prevent me from testifying in person on behalf of these three outstanding Americans. I do highly recommend approval of this great honor for these deserving American heroes. I base my reccomendation on my years of military service including tours of duty in both Vietnam and Korea. In my Judgement they are deserving of the highest honors our country can award for their exceptional and praiseworthy contributions in healing the deep wounds caused by the Vietnam War. They pass the acid test of performance and achievement reserved for our highest honors. They accomplished their objectives in an atmosphere not dissimilar from that found in the war zone of Vietnam. The personal sacrifices they paid in their effort to generate an atmosphere where all Americans could put aside their differences, heal their wounds and come together as a nation is truly outstanding. They saw a need and responded to this challenge the same as our heroes do in battle. Their deed is just as valorious and deserving of recognition as any we are likely to experience in our lifetime.

Jan Scruggs could be rightfully called the father of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial. His sensitivity to the needs of our nation and his extraordinary effort to see it come to pass is a story of rare courage. Equally courageous is the loyal understanding support of his principal colleagues Jack Wheeler and Robert Doubek. They all demonstrated that they had the courage of their convictions and the over riding interest of the country at heart at all times.

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Brigadier General George B. Price
United States Army
Retired

They are men of impeccable integrity, fortitude, resiliency and vision. They passed all challenges and tests of their ability to manage, account for and complete a project of the magnitude of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Fund with flying colors - never once breeching the special trust and confidence of the American people and accounting for all contributions from all sources.

I urge you to approve H.R. 2591 which authorizes the striking of gold medals honoring these three distinguished Americans. They have paid their dues through dedicated service on the battlefield and at home.

Respectfully yours,

George B. Price
B.G., USA, Ret.

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RECEIVED
MAY 22 1986

HUGH SIDEY

May 17, 1986

Dear Congressman Annunzio,

I would like to add my endorsement for giving the Gold Medal to those three remarkable Vietnam veterans — Scruggs, Doubek and Wheeler.

They not only were the leaders in producing the memorial, they were in a special way, the men who brought dignity to all those who served, the men who taught this nation that there is great honor and beauty in the act of accepting duty and fulfilling it honorably.

I've watched this wonderful old city for 30 years. I cannot think of more deserving Americans.

Cordially,

Hugh Sidey

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